UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Wind Ensemble: We Are Nature

Saturday, November 16, 2024 at 7:30 pm | York University Tribute Communities Recital Hall

PROGRAM

The Magic of This Dawn

Christopher Sainsbury (b. 1962)

Beneath

Alex Shapiro (b. 1962)

James Wu, *conductor*

Prairie Concerto

1. Shimmering gold, Unfolding skies
   alpenglow at dawn from the foothills
2. Tumbling Sapphires
   mountain creek at midday
3. Paradisum
   elysian twilight on limestone cathedrals

Sam Kerr (b. 2000)

Sam Kerr, *percussion*
Winner, Faculty of Music Winds Concerto Competition 2020

Intermission

Realms of Memory and Madness

Graydon Mulholland (b. 1996)

Graduate Composer-in-Residence, 23/24

Endurance

Timothy Mahr (b. 1956)

Stillness
after Amelia Earhart

Tom Davoren (b. 1986)

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

As part of the Faculty's commitment to improving Indigenous inclusion, we call upon all members of our community to start/continue their personal journeys towards understanding and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' histories, truths and cultures. Visit indigenous.utoronto.ca to learn more.

PROGRAM NOTES

Welcome to this evening of music chosen to remind us that we are part of the natural world. Despite the predominant historic cultural desire to "have dominion" over nature, we rely utterly on the health of the natural system over which we have tried to exert control for thousands of years. Each of our pieces this evening refers to some aspect of our natural environment, and reminds us that we are part of a large and awe-inspiring natural world.

***THE MAGIC OF THIS DAWN* – Christopher Sainsbury**
Christopher Sainsbury is an Australian composer and professor at the Australian National University in Canberra. Prior to his appointment at ANU he worked at the Aboriginal Visual and Performing Arts at the Eora Centre in Sydney. Sainsbury has a deep interest in regionalism in music, drawing from the images from his local region and incorporating them into his creative work. He is a mixed-heritage indigenous Australian, identifying as a Dharug/Eora aboriginal person. The title for tonight's work was taken from a line by regionalist American poet Jay Sigmund. In the score, Sainsbury refers to the poem and states that "in my own way I'm paying homage to Australian First Nations peoples in this work, creating something of an imagined pristine environment, a place where my ancestors lived." Sainsbury has a long history of supporting indigenous creation. Specifically, he is the founder and director of the Ngarra-burria First Peoples Composers Program, a unique and vibrant program designed to support and promote the activities and development of Australian indigenous composers. For more information on Christopher Sainsbury and this remarkable initiative, please see: https://www.sainsburymusic.com/ngarra-burria

***BENEATH* – Alex Shapiro**
Beneath is the third movement of Alex Shapiro's major work *Immersion* for symphonic wind band and electronic track. In this piece, Shapiro explores the underwater world of the great oceans. The ocean has been a life-long source of comfort and inspiration for Shapiro, and she has always lived on either the Atlantic or Pacific shore. Composed in 2010, *Immersion* was one of the earliest pieces for wind band that employed a recorded track of electronic effects. The conductor is connected to a click-track that aligns the live music with the electronic track. Of particular interest is the sampling of the sounds of the humpback whale – you will hear the whale song throughout, but listen for it in two particular motivic forms, one featuring a prominent descending major second (*la-sol*), and the other an ascending perfect fourth (*sol-doh*). These two gestures become significant features of the piece, and stand out as a prominent organic voice in the electronic environment of the track. Alex Shapiro spent several decades in southern California as a successful film composer before moving north to the San Juan Islands to focus on concert music. She is a dedicated advocate for marine life, is also committed to encouraging young composers generally, and female composers specifically. For more about Alex and her work: https://www.alexshapiro.org/

PRAIRIE CONCERTO – Sam Kerr
This is the premiere performance of *Prairie Concerto*, and the first time the Wind Ensemble has performed a concerto performed by the composer! Sam Kerr won the Winds Concerto Competition in 2020, but local inconveniences led to the cancellation of his anticipated performance. The creation of this work is the result of our conversations about a meaningful substitution. Sam has written this concerto in his studio in Boston whilst a graduate student at the New England Conservatory. We are delighted to finally be able to feature him, especially in this brand-new work. For more about Sam: https://www.samuelkerrmusic.com/

His program note:
I have been writing about the natural world I grew up in for quite literally the entire time I've called myself a composer. Despite (perhaps feeble) attempts, I have been unable to extricate the profound experience of being in the prairies and mountains of Alberta with my personal and artistic self, and have been exploring this connection through music for well over a decade. ***Prairie Concerto*** *is the latest and perhaps most profound distillation of this alpine wandering – through three movements, each roughly portraying a tableau of Albertan scenery through progressive times of day, this concerto is a meditation on the profoundly moving, infinitely splendid natural world of the foothills and Canadian Rockies. More personally, Prairie Concerto is a reflection on the meaning of home – how does one's relationship change to where they grew up after moving away, going through undergrad (including a small public health crisis), and coming back?How does one's coming of age affect how they see themselves and where they belong? These questions swirl through each movement in subtle but driving ostinati, floating arpeggios, and invocations of the infinite sublime of a prairie-mountain soundscape. With inspiration from compositional forebearers including Joseph Schwantner, Steve Reich, Russell Hartenberger, and Kati Agócs,* ***Prairie Concerto*** *embarks on a fundamentally human journey of change through shimmering fields of golden wheat at dawn, a frenzied mountain creek at midday, and a vast elysian sunset across the limestone cathedrals of the Rocky Mountains.*
-Sam Kerr

MEMORY AND MADNESS – Graydon Mulholland
This work explores the human inner world, an often-overlooked but crucial part of nature. *Memory and Madness* was composed in the past year, during the time in which Graydon was the Wind Ensemble's Composer-in-Residence. The CiR program pairs graduate composers with ensembles across the Faculty of Music, resulting in works that are custom-built for the groups. Pedagogical and artistic benefits for both ensemble members and composers are significant. Dr. Mulholland is a recent graduate of the UofT DMA program in composition. For more about Graydon Mulholland's work: https://www.graydonmulholland.com/

Here is his note about tonight's piece:
Memory and Madness is a work that explores musical memory in the form of listener recognition. Using extremely recognizable quotations from the Western Classical Canon, the work takes 5 "memories" and recomposes them. Here, quotation performs as a cultural agent. By taking existing works of music and placing them within a new context, the piece draws upon the existing cultural associations of these works. These cultural associations are likely to include classical tradition and elegance, German and Austrian musical traditions, notions of the "standard repertoire", and the Western Classical Canon as a whole. Although a listener may recognize most or all the quotations presented, there will be perceived differences from the original regarding style, tonality, and acoustic/electronic timbres. This is a listening experience that is based on recognition and draws largely from the world of non-classical music. In popular music, sampling and musical borrowing is often intended to create a dialogue between an original context and a new context. Recent examples of this include "Cold Heart (pnau remix)" by Elton John and Dua Lipa, which uses John's songs "Rocket Man", "Kiss the Bride", "Sacrifice", and "Where's the Shoorah?" as source material, and "Lil Boo Thang" by Paul Russell, which uses the song "Best of My Love" by The Emotions as source material. In these examples, recognition and the cultural memories associated with these songs form the core of the listening experience. In Memory and Madness, the ensemble's materials become increasingly alienated from their source material while a physically modelled piano (keyboard playing through Pianoteq software piano) becomes more warped and degraded. The intention of the piece is to convey a sense of delirium and madness by presenting a dialogue between the

cultural and temporal associations of the source material and the new material. These may vary from person to person, but the overall loss of stability and stylistic consistency should form the crux of the listening experience.
-Graydon Mulholland

ENDURANCE- Timothy Mahr
Historically, much human interaction with nature has been depicted as a battle or a competition, particularly in situations where the natural environment is hostile to human existence. This was never more the case than in late 1914 when Ernest Shackleton's wooden ship *Endurance* was crushed by ice and sunk off Antarctica, leaving the captain and crew with few provisions and poor chances of survival. Despite this, the group of twenty-eight made their way across hundreds of miles of snow on foot, and camped on the shore while six of their number sailed off on a modified life-boat to seek rescue (Yes, they dragged the life boat all that way!). In the end, and with the loss of only a few toes, all twenty-eight men survived, with rescue arriving in August, 2016. The story of the *Endurance* and her crew remains an astonishing and inspiring story of collective human courage and resilience in the face of unimaginable odds. Mahr's composition is focused not on the physicality of the experience itself, but rather on the feelings of inspiration and awe he experienced when reading about the ordeal. Nevertheless, for northern dwellers who have experienced cold, there may be sounds here that bring up visual memories of snow, ice, wind, or desolate stillness. For more about Timothy Mahr: https://www.timothymahr.com/

STILLNESS – Tom Davoren
The sky is the final natural frontier in our exploration this evening. Human desire to fly was first immortalized in the ancient myth of Icarus and Daedalus. Although it is now hard to imagine a world without flight, regular human interaction with the sky only dates to the Wright Brothers' important moment in 1903. Amelia Earhart (1897-1937) was an important female aviation pioneer. Among her may achievements was the flight that inspired *Stillness* – she was the first woman to fly across the Atlantic in June,1928. Although she did not pilot that particular flight, she went on to do so, solo, in 1932. The 1928 flight originated in Newfoundland and was scheduled to arrive in Southhampton, England. Bad weather resulted in the flight landing in the water just off Burry Town, in Southwest Wales, 20 hours later. The hymn that starts with the flugelhorn solo mid-way through the piece is a local hymn entitled *Burry Port* by John Roberts. This hymn, forgotten for years, was discovered by a member of the *Burry Town Band* during the time that Davoren was setting about writing this work. The composer was enchanted by the idea that the hymn would have been played by the band in the early 20th century, in the same era as Earhart's historic flight. The title itself comes from part of Earhart's statement to a reporter after arriving in Burry: *"How lovely your country is. The stillness and the silence bring back again the almost awesome feeling which came to me as, hour after hour, we pushed forward through the thick clouds and fog. It was as if we were alone in the world. To think that 48 hours ago I was in America and now I am in Wales!"* For more about Tom Davoren: https://www.tomdavorenmusic.com/

Program notes by Gillian MacKay

University of Toronto Wind Ensemble

FLUTE
Ivy Bumanglag
Josh Chong
Gihae (Lisa) Han
Lauren Radeschi

OBOE
Clara Aristanto
Yeonji Oh
Christopher Vishy

CLARINET
Cheng Cheng
Marco Ding
Benjamin Gillingham-Murray
Dario Hila
Eliza Abbott

BASSOON and CONTRABASSOON
Kendal Morrison
Grace Qiu
Rita Ren

SAXOPHONE
Kannan Bloor
Charlotte Chau
Kun Huang
Adrian Leung
Chantelle Tom-Ying
Yunfei Xie

PIANO/KEYBOARD
Tina Chen

BASS
Matthieu Savard *

GRADUATE CONDUCTORS
Toby Moisey
James Wu

TRUMPET
Kevin Hayward
Naomi Hunter
Jayang Kim
Daniel Rofaiel
Tamsin Spiller
Kevin Weijie Zhao

HORN
Nathan Bergman
Ethan Chialtas
Ewen Hutton
Ilinca Stafie *

TROMBONE
Abellia Chan
Kenzie Ford
Ian Tong (bass) +

EUPHONIUM
Lionel Stanway

TUBA
Elizabeth Fair +
Jack Shiels

PERCUSSION
Amiel Ang
Reuben Faigao
Yi-Hsuan Lo *
Jerry Yuan
Yue Yin Zhang
Jeffrey Zhu

*guest musicians
+ensemble managers